



KŪKULU KE EA A KANALOA

KAHO`OLawe ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION

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Executive Director

Testimony of MICHAEL K. NAHO`OPTI Executive Director

Before the House Committee on HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Wednesday, February 2, 2011
8:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 329

In consideration of HOUSE BILL 1224 RELATING TO THE KAHO`OLawe ISLAND RESERVE

House Bill 1224 authorizes a portion of the conveyance tax revenues to be used to replenish the Kaho`olawe Rehabilitation Trust Fund for the long-term restoration of Kaho`olawe. The Kaho`olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC) supports this measure that would provide permanent state statutory funding for the restoration of Kaho`olawe.

When the State of Hawaii accepted the return of the island of Kaho`olawe in 1994, it accepted the responsibility "to preserve and protect a corner of their island state so that future generations can become familiar with their island's past human and natural heritage. For many Native Hawaiians and others, Kaho`olawe is a special place that has been sanctified by the loss of life in a struggle between traditional values and Western concepts of land use and management" (Restoring a Cultural Treasure, Kaho`olawe Island Conveyance Commission).

As stated in the Federally-mandated Kaho`olawe Island Conveyance Commission (KICC) final report to Congress in 1993, "in the short term, federal funds will provide the bulk of the program support for specific soil conservation projects and related activities. In the longer term, however, state revenues will be needed to continue and enhance those activities initiated with federal funds." For the past 16 years, the initial Federal funding has allowed the KIRC to establish many of its innovative programs that emphasize ancestral and traditional knowledge, provide a cultural approach of respect and connectivity to the environment, and integrate ancient and modern resource management techniques.

Without a secure future funding source, the KIRC estimates approximately three to possibly four years of funding are left. With 25% of the island still uncleared of unexploded ordnance and only 10% cleared for intensive use, the KIRC's continuing presence on Kaho`olawe is needed to ensure the protection of the general public. Passage of this measure is critical for fulfilling the State of Hawai'i's long-term commitment to restore and protect this one last untouched corner of Hawai'i.